

Nutritional Guide for Basketball Players

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In order to truly achieve your potential on the court, it is imperative that you develop healthy eating habits. The following info serves as a "nutritional guide" for putting you on the right path. This guide is very basic in nature. For an in depth look at your eating habits you should contact a Registered Dietician (RD). It is important to understand that there are no "bad" foods - any food can be incorporated into your diet in moderation. You should try and reduce your intake of refined sugars (cookies, etc.) and saturated fat (butter, etc.) and eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Optimum basketball performance requires sound nutritional habits. You can get your daily requirements of nutrients through whole food, so don't rely too heavily on the use of supplements (the only exception to that is the addition of a "weight gain" shake for those of you trying to really increase bodyweight). Steer clear of "performance" enhancing supplements; Creatine, ephedrine, etc. because of the possible side effects.

It is very important not to overlook the role nutrition plays in acquiring maximum physical development. What you eat on a daily basis helps determine your body fat levels as well as how much energy you have for intense, rigorous workouts, practices and games. Whether you are trying to gain muscle, reduce body fat, or maintain your current stature - it is very important you follow these basic dietary recommendations:

A balanced diet consists of approximately 60-65% carbohydrates, 15-20% fat and 10-15% protein.

Eat a variety of healthy foods (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, etc.).

LIMIT your intake of fat, sugar, and sodium.

Drink plenty of WATER!

Eat 5-7 "smaller" meals throughout the day (size of meal depends on actual goal: weight loss vs. weight gain).

Food Choices

Protein: fish, chicken, tuna, lean beef, turkey, low fat dairy products, Muscle Milk

Carbs: oatmeal, brown rice, whole wheat pasta and breads, sweet potatoes, beans, fruits and veggies

Fat: fish, nuts, peanut butter

Sample Menu:

Breakfast: Orange juice, large bowl of Raisin Bran, and a banana.

Snack: 1 cup of yogurt, and two granola bars.

Lunch: 2 turkey sandwiches, apple, milk, and 4 oatmeal cookies.

Snack: 2 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and milk.

Dinner: 2 chicken breasts, potatoes, steamed vegetables, and a roll.

Snack: 2 english muffins with peanut butter.

Fluid Goals

It is extremely important to be well hydrated, especially during the summer heat. Your performance on the court can decrease dramatically when your body is low on water. You should aim to drink water all day long, don't wait until you are thirsty.

Drink 16 oz. of fluid 2 hours before a workout, practice, or game.

Drink 8 oz. 15 minutes prior to a workout, practice, or game.

Drink during the workout, practice, or game.

Drink 24 oz. per pound of bodyweight lost.

Nutritional Tips

Consume enough calories to add 1lb. of bodyweight per week. If you aren't gaining weight with what you are currently eating... EAT MORE!

Try and get most of your calories from regular food and don't look for supplements as a cure all.

Adopt health eating habits that will last you a lifetime. Don't bother with a quick fix or a temporary diet. If you are on a diet temporarily, you will lose the results once you stop.

Plan your day, pack snacks, wake up early enough to eat breakfast, etc.

Eat a diet rich in complex carbohydrates to provide the energy source to fuel your intense training, practices, and games.

Pre-Game Rules:

Eat lightly before you play. You don't want a full stomach to weigh you down.

Limit eating fatty foods before you play.

Drink sufficient amounts of water (see above for fluid requirements).

Post-Game Rules:

Consume carbohydrate rich foods and beverages (Gatorade) as soon as possible after you play. This will replenish your muscle's energy stores. Replace fluids that have been lost (see above for fluid requirements). Replace any potassium or sodium that has been lost during competition or training. Fruits, vegetables, and salty foods are excellent for this. Super Shake: 1 cup of frozen fruit (strawberries and/or blueberries work well) 1 cup of either low fat milk or orange/apple juice 1 cup of low fat yogurt 1 to 2 scoops of Muscle Milk

Alan Stein is the former co-owner of Elite Athlete Training Systems, Inc. and is now the president of Stronger Team. He is also the Head Strength & Conditioning coach for the nationally renowned Montrose Christian Mustangs boy's basketball program. Alan brings a wealth of valuable experience to his training arsenal after years of extensive work with elite high school, college, and NBA players.

His passion, enthusiasm, and innovative training techniques make him one of the nation's leading experts on productive training for basketball players. Alan is a performance consultant for Nike basketball as well as the head conditioning coach for the annual McDonald's All American game, the Jordan All American Classic, the NBA Player's Association's Top 100 Camp, and Five Star basketball camps. He is a sought after lecturer at basketball camps across the country and is regularly featured in publications such as Winning Hoops, Time Out, Dime, American Basketball Quarterly, Stack, and Men's Health.